

A LETTER REGARDING THE SUBJECT OF THE TRINITY

Sister L:

A few points:

One: I do not support the trinity doctrine. The trinity is a Catholic doctrine, and you may have a different understanding of the Godhead than I possess, but I (and I believe you) know that the doctrine of the trinity is a Catholic doctrine, and the word trinity is a Catholic word. Perhaps if you have listened to what we present since 2008 then you can cite one time that I have called the Godhead the trinity? You cannot do it. I know the difference. I simply understand the doctrine of the Godhead as expressed so clearly by Sister White:

"The Father cannot be described by the things of earth. The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The word of God declares Him to be 'the express image of His person.' 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

Here is shown the personality of the Father.

"The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio. In the name of these three powers,--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ." ~Bible Training School, March 1, 1906.

This definition of the Godhead is not how you understand it, but it is not the definition of the Catholic trinity either. You know that it is not. At least I assume that you know that it is not, for those that I have interacted with on the Godhead issue that possess the same understanding (or similar) as yourself, know full well that the Catholic definition of the trinity has to do with one god that manifests itself in three forms. Even if you reject the definition just set forth by the Spirit of Prophecy, you know full well that at minimum, the definition there is something other than the Catholic trinity.

All I am saying at this point is that those who hold the view of the Godhead similar or as you do lose all credibility when they assign the Catholic doctrine of the trinity to those that do not agree with them, when they are familiar with what the Catholic doctrine truly teaches. The Godhead set forth in the Spirit of Prophecy is not the Catholic doctrine of the trinity. You may not agree with it, but you have no credibility if you cannot make the distinction.

Two: The reason the Godhead is not on either chart is because it was not identified as either a foundational truth or a pillar. It is your position that stands in opposition to the light expressed upon the charts. Inspiration has clearly and specifically identified that the charts represent the foundational truths of Adventism, and there are many biblical truths that are not represented upon the charts, and the Godhead is one of those truths. Yet those who hold the same or similar views as yourself point to the historical positioning of the Adventist Church in regard to the doctrine of the Godhead and claim that the reception of the Catholic doctrine of the trinity is a fulfillment of the attack against the foundations of Adventism which Sister White often warned about; yet as I just stated, and which can easily be demonstrated, the doctrine of the Godhead is not represented on either chart. It's not there.

I know full well that virtually all, if not all the pioneers understood the Godhead as you do. That fact does not make the Godhead doctrine a foundational truth. The foundational truths have been

specifically identified as the truths represented upon the 1843 chart, and the Godhead doctrine is not represented upon the chart. The logic that is used concerning the fact that all the pioneers understood the Godhead as you do, therefore their understanding of the Godhead was a foundational understanding seems strong, but is not. Inspiration has been very definite concerning what truths were to be recognized as foundational truths, and your logic certainly wouldn't be understood as valid if we were to ask how many of the pioneers worshiped upon Sunday during 1843, or how many pioneers knew the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 was the heavenly sanctuary during that same period? We have been warned the foundational truths and the truths represented as pillars would come under attack, but the Godhead doctrine has not been identified as such by Inspiration.

Now to your questions:

Why wasn't the Trinity Doctrine represented on either prophecy chart if it is what we are to return to today?

I have never claimed we are to return to the Catholic Trinity doctrine. In the principles of debate, which Christians are not to employ, the rule of the straw man is what you are applying here. You cannot demonstrate one time that I ever taught or implied that we were ever to embrace the trinity doctrine, let alone return to it. If you cannot divest yourself from this perspective of this discussion my answer could never be understood by you, for your preconceptions would forbid you from following the logic I apply.

I do not teach or believe that we return to the doctrine of the trinity. I teach that the doctrine of the Godhead is a progressive light. It was a light that was not understood by the pioneers, and it was a light that was introduced plainly and clearly for the first time in history beginning in the 1880's. Therefore; your claim that I teach we are to return to the Catholic trinity doctrine is not valid, in terms of what I teach. You would do better to deal with why my teachings are incorrect, than to misrepresent the teachings. If the teachings I promote are erroneous the Holy Spirit will guide you in your ability to expose their falsehood without misrepresenting my words or the logic of the premises I set forth. Why didn't the Adventist church officially incorporate the Trinity doctrine into its statements of belief until 1980 in Dallas Texas if it wasn't part of the new theology? It should have been a part of the statements of belief all along if it was always a true Adventist belief.

The fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been imbibing in the doctrines of Rome has no relevance to our discussion on the doctrine of the Godhead. The pioneers were virtually unanimous in their rejection of a creed. They determined that for the church to develop a creed was to set aside the authority of the Bible. The pioneers were absolutely correct in their logic on this subject. But as time progressed and the apostasy of the church grew deeper, a creed, then church manual and on and on has been developed. Whenever men begin to substitute their words for the word of God there is corruption and a judgment promised. That being said: I have never taught that the Catholic trinity doctrine was an original belief of Adventism, nor have I taught that the definition of the Godhead as set forth in the Spirit of Prophecy was held by any pioneers before the 1880 time period. Nor do the actions of the Church in their history since they rejected the latter rain in the 1888 time period provide evidence that defines the doctrine of the Godhead. Does their acceptance of woman elders provide evidence that they are now worshiping the goddess Diana? When it comes to biblical doctrine circumstantial evidence should be produced last, if at all.

Why does it say in the Catholic handbook that "The mystery of the trinity is the Central Doctrine of the

Catholic church upon which all the other teachings of the church are based"? (This includes the mass, Sunday keeping, worship of Mary, etc) if it is a protestant doctrine? --- It mysteriously historically appeared in the 3rd century along with the first Sunday Law just prior to the appearance of the first pope. This is taught in the book, Truth Triumphant by BG Wilkenson, and in the book, The Two Republics by AT Jones.

It says these things in these books because it is a historical fact. A fact which I do not deny. Yet once again I will remind you that the Catholic doctrine of the trinity is not the following definition:

"Jesus declared, 'I am the resurrection, and the life.' In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. 'He that hath the Son hath life.' The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life." ~Desire of Ages, 530.

"We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds." ~Manuscript Releases, volume 7, 299.

Do you believe that Christ's life is original and unborrowed? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is a person? Neither of these beliefs could be construed as being part of the Catholic definition of the trinity. The Godhead is three persons, not as Catholic doctrine defines it as one god that manifests itself as three entities. These three previous Spirit of Prophecy passages, and there are others, would never be accepted by Catholicism as definitions of the trinity. Until you can allow yourself to come out from under the indoctrination that allows you to only see two definitions of the Godhead, ie., the trinity and yours, you will be unable to evaluate what I teach on this subject in a Christian fashion, for as I have already stated if you are on the correct side of this discussion, then the Holy Spirit will guide you in your ability to demonstrate my errors without using accusations about what I teach that are not valid, and which you cannot bring any evidence from my public teachings to support.

I have never denied the Catholic doctrine of the trinity is not their foundational truth. I believe it. It doesn't matter if I believe it, it is easily demonstrable by their own words.

Why didn't Ellen White, a prophet, even once condemn or criticize her husband or any of the other pioneers for saying what they did about the Trinity doctrine if their belief was incorrect?

Your question is not a proof of the truth of the Godhead one way or another. It may appear that way at face value, but only because you are holding to a preconception concerning the pioneer teaching of the Godhead. If the fact that she never rebuked any pioneers for their understanding of the Godhead before she penned the The Desire of Ages was proof that they were holding to the correct understanding of the Godhead, then you would have a strong answer for my following question. Why did the pioneers that were still alive after the publication of The Desire of Ages go silent concerning the pioneer understanding of the Godhead after that time? If the testimony of the pioneers is to be factored into the biblical definition of the Godhead, then where are the strong protests against her defining the Godhead as she does in The Desire of Ages, and consistently does from that time onward?

"In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified

energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." ~ Desire of Ages 671.

Why instead did she criticize Kellogg and others who believed as he did after he wrote the Living Temple which was the alpha of apostasy, and later all believed in a trinity of Gods.

Your preconception of the Godhead greatly prevents you from working through the prophecy of the alpha and omega. There are several different teachings in Adventism identifying the omega apostasy. (Only one is correct.) Those, such as yourself who are convinced that the omega is the reception of the Catholic doctrine of the trinity base your conclusion upon the references to the "personality of God" when Sister White deals with the alpha and omega apostasy. To answer your last question requires the recognition that there are other understandings of the omega apostasy beyond which you hold to. Do you think that when it comes to the final apostasy that Satan is going to have simply one counterfeit of the truth? It is at this level of the Godhead subject where you are truly on shaky ground, though you could not recognize it without some self-examination of your prophetic understandings.

The omega apostasy is the apostasy in biblical history that all other apostasies prefigure, for all the prophets, including Sister White were addressing the end of the world. Saul's interaction with the witch of Endor is an illustration of the omega. The strong delusion of Thessalonians is the omega apostasy. Israel on the borders of the Promised Land is the omega. Israel dancing around the golden calf is the omega. The Jew's crying out to "crucify Him" is the omega. Whatever the omega apostasy represents, it must be consistent with the entire biblical record of the omega. The omega is illustrated in Jeremiah 6:16 as the return to the old paths, which Sister White clearly defines as the truths represented upon the 1843 and 1850 charts. The omega apostasy is an apostasy that can be represented by the rejection of those foundational truths. Say what you will about Sister White's words concerning the omega apostasy, but the doctrine of the Godhead has never been identified by Inspiration as a pillar or a foundational truth. The doctrine of the Godhead is not a truth that we return to, in order to find the old paths.

Habakkuk identifies the 1843 and the 1850 charts as tables. They are the two tables given to modern Israel when Christ entered into covenant with them at the beginning of Adventism that parallel the two tables of the ten commandments that were given to ancient Israel when He entered into covenant with them. The truths on the two charts, according to Sister White are as the Rock of Ages, just as the Ten Commandments represent the character of Christ. When we take away or add to the Ten Commandments we are under God's condemnation. To add the Godhead doctrine to the foundational truths is to stand under the identical condemnation. Sin doesn't exist if someone does not know. This is one of the reasons the Ten Commandments were written out. God was specific and clear what His law was, because He holds men under condemnation who reject His law, but He also condemns men who take away from or add to His law.

Your study may have not reached the level where you have sufficient light to understand the following, but it is never the less abundantly clear. The truths that God has identified as His foundational truths and His pillars are carefully and specifically set forth, and the doctrine of the Godhead is not among those truths. Yet the Spirit of Prophecy informs us that the omega apostasy will consist of, among other

things, an attack upon those pillars and foundations. You claim the introduction and reception of the doctrine of the Catholic trinity is the attack upon the foundations that is identified in the omega apostasy, and in so claiming you are adding to the truths represented upon Habakkuk's two tables. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19. It is the work of the man of sin to change God's law. Far be it from us to participate in this principle in connection with the truths represented upon the two tables He gave to modern Israel when He entered into covenant with them at the beginning of Adventism."

~Jeff Pippenger